

INVESTOR IN PEOPLE CASE STUDY: SPECSAVERS TEWKESBURY



Investors in People has given me the tools to run a successful business. It's made me look at how to motivate and retain good staff. Our development programmes have made staff happier and more involved in the success of Specsavers Tewkesbury – which in turn has helped to raise our performance.

Glenn Dunkley, Retail Director

Background

Size: 10 people

Sector: ophthalmic/retail

Locations: Tewkesbury

Status: Recognised as an Investor in People, December 05



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The organisation

Glenn Dunkley acquired a local opticians` practice to found his Specsavers store in High Street, Tewkesbury in June 2002, with a staff of just four. Established as a joint venture partnership with Guernsey-based Specsavers Optical Group, the store began offering the full range of high street optical services including sight examinations, the supply of spectacles and contact lenses and repairs and adjustments. Under Glenn`s leadership, the business gradually outgrew its original home. In June 2005, Specsavers Tewkesbury re-located, with its expanded team of ten to larger premises in nearby Bishop`s Walk.

The challenge

Tewkesbury had long been identified by the parent group as a sound, potential site for a Specsavers store. The population, the demographics and the location all appeared to fit the bill. Glenn Dunkley`s challenge was to turn the hopes and ambitions of the Specsavers Group into hard figures.

“Specsavers prices are the cheapest on the street,” Glenn says. “But competitive prices are driven by high sales volumes. So the pressure was on from the very beginning.”

Glenn Dunkley needed to quickly instil the `Specsavers Way` through intensive and formalised programmes of training and development.

“Customer service is a good example,” Glenn says.

“There are three other opticians in the town. So you can`t provide a less than perfect service and still expect people to come rushing to you. Customer service needs to be as good as we can manage.”

More recently, the move to the new premises has brought fresh challenges for Glenn and his team.

“There is the added expense of moving to a larger building. The outgoings are 30% higher than the other place. So the pressure is there to keep raising our performance.”

The strategy

Glenn’s first task was to introduce a Career Development Programme for every member of staff, using the national Specsavers modules for staff training. The programme includes an induction into the `Specsavers way` and an annual round of appraisals to enable staff to identify particular training needs.

“I probably spend a fair proportion of my time just making sure the training is in place and that the team are happy,” Glenn says. “The better trained they are and the greater their product knowledge, the better they can serve the customers. And the happier the customers are, the more they will recommend us to other people. It’s a thing that spirals to the benefit of the business.”

Glenn has also worked hard at putting good systems of communication into place. By receiving regular information on sales and growth targets, staff have gained a greater awareness of their role in the success of the business.

Despite employing such a small team, Specsavers Tewkesbury provides good opportunities for career progression.

“I’ve got a couple of younger people – one of whom is a trainee dispensing optician,” says Glenn.

“I’ve someone else who joined us two months ago, who is going through all of the Specsavers Career Development programme – and she would possibly like to do the dispensing optician course as well. So the opportunities are always there for the right people.”

Specsavers Tewkesbury committed to the Investors in People standard January 2005, just months before the planned re-location.

“When we started out most things were done informally – which worked fine when there were only four of us. By the beginning of 2005, the business was growing quite significantly and Investors in People helped us to make our training and our communication much more structured - which enables us to manage our growth much more effectively.”

Staff at Tewkesbury are clearly delighted with the way the firm has invested in their futures.

One of the team reported that she was about to complete her Specsavers Level 4 training and was completing an NVQ Level II in Business Administration. An optometrist receives DVDs from Specsavers that contain updates on medical and operational issues as part of Continuing Professional Development. The optical and dispensing assistants use IT systems to identify different types of lenses and how to repair and adjust spectacles.

The results

Sales doubled in a single year in the old premises, before the size of the building began to inhibit further growth. The re-location has seen sales increase by 25% in less than a year.

Customer service also continues to improve, with the `Mystery Shopper` recording an increased rating of 92%. Staff turnover is almost non-existent.

“Three of our original team are still with us,” Glenn says.

9 February, 2007